

100

Biography

COUNTRY STYLE

WYNFORD VAUGHAN-THOMAS: *Mudly in All Directions*. 254pp. Longmans. 36s.

BERTA RUCK: *A Trickle of Welsh Blood*. 224pp. Hutchinson. 30s.
IAN NIALI: *A Galloway Childhood*. Illustrated by C. F. Tunnicliffe. 182pp. Heinemann. 30s.

English visitors to rural Wales are sometimes surprised to find copies of George Borrow in the bookshops and still more to meet Welshmen who are proud to claim that their grandfather had met the philologist novelist on his travels. It is partly because Borrow was one of the first Englishmen to take a serious interest in the Welsh people, but it is also because he describes a country that is still, in many spots, quite recognizable.

Wynford Vaughan-Thomas's journey, sponsored by the B.B.C., passes similarly through many of those parts which have changed least in the past 100 years. To begin with, it was made on horseback. Now Mr. Vaughan-Thomas had not ridden before, and his introduction to the horse brought vicissitudes and enough saddle-and-sugarlump talk to make his book a first choice Christmas present for all pony-riders. But what is more important is that the horse enabled him to travel by bridle-paths inaccessible to the car and not much known to the hiker. From St. David's in Pembrokeshire he moved through the Preseli Hills and over the "Desert of Wales" on the Radnor-Brocknock border, north to the Berwyns and the Dee Estuary. Only at Llanrhadrud did he cross a regular tourist road, and even there he ignored the famous cascade, though he confesses that he would have liked to have seen it in the days of Sir Watkins Williams Wynne who "used to dam the water upstream and then let it go with a fearful wallop to please distinguished visitors".

Mr. Vaughan-Thomas, as might be expected from so experienced a commentator, is lively and observant, and in his long rides over the more solitary places he let his thoughts travel back over his life to give a kind of non-chronological autobiography. This method is often successful. At Rhydown, for instance, in the chapel of Dylan Thomas's brooding great-uncle, he recalls his days with the younger poet at Swansea Grammar School, where Mr. Thomas, Senior, glowered "down on me like a black bat in his M.A. gown". But when Strumble Head, where the French landed in 1797, leads the author to a long account of the Allied landing in France in 1944, or a reference to George Borrow brings out an interview with the late Donald McGill, the comic postcard artist, the reader may become rather impatient at what seem to be unnecessary delays. These interruptions apart, the book takes one on an exhilarating and most agreeably companioned tour of some of the least-visited parts of southern Britain.

Mrs. Berta Ruck's autobiography is even less chronological—a chapter which begins with her eighty-eighth birthday is followed by another about her schooldays seventy years earlier. Indeed, her memory goes back even farther, to an Anglesey holiday in the year of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee and to many childhood visits to her grandmother in Merioneth. There is a certain amount of guide book writing, which seems to have got in almost by accident, and some reminiscences of famous Welshmen of the past fifty years—Angustius John, Caroline Evans, Emlyn Williams. But by far the most engaging character in the book is the author herself—an old lady, looking back over a long life, yet so alert that she admires both the poetic Thomases, R.S. as well as Dylan, and lists Ed McBain and Ian Fleming among her favourite authors.

Ian Niall, too, lives in Wales, though he was brought up in the Machers of Wigtownshire, one of the parts of Scotland least known to the English tourist, which consists, mostly, of unspectacular tableland with the Isle of Man to the south and the hills of Galloway to the west, north and east. As a boy Mr. Niall had no eye for scenery and he does not so much as mention St. Ninian or the Isle of Whithorn. Yet there is nothing small about the world he draws:

The fields were greener, the trees were taller, the spots on the trout I caught were the most brilliant red you could ever imagine, and the curlew's cry would have broken your heart and you will never hear its like, now or ever. You must take my word for that.

And, indeed, the reader does take his word. For, in spite of its frank nostalgia, this is a splendidly factual account of a boy's life in a lowland Scottish farm in the early years of this century. Most of the book is given to the animals and objects which surrounded the boy every day. But there are also seasonal and less frequent pleasures: harvesting, with hired men brought over from Ulster, fairs at Wigtown or Newton Stewart, picnics on the lovely coast of Luce Bay, and even the Sunday preachings. Above all, there is the scene of the interlocking strength of family loyalty, shown in a fine portrait gallery of grandfather, grandmother, uncles and aunts; the boy's parents, who lived in Glasgow, scarcely come into the book.

All this is told in a sober, plain style, which is yet capable of vivid description. Perhaps, in his years in Wales, the author has forgotten the Scots speech of his family—surely no boy, in the land of Burns, would call *Campanula rotundifolia*, the harebell. Nevertheless, though the sound of Lallans may be lacking, this is a delightful and thoroughly convincing picture of a life as wholesome and profitable as a prize Belted Galloway.

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GOING IT ALONE

CONSTANCE BABINGTON SMITH: *Amy Johnson*. 384pp. Collins. £2 5s.

The Yorkshire girl who made it solo to Australia represents a phase of pioneer aviation that was passing before her own brief life was over. Amy Johnson had found it hard to get a backing for her flight in 1930 because few believed she could achieve it; three years later it was hard to devise a spectacle for the sated public. Records were made and challenged and broken as casually as a modern plane breaks the sound barrier. Women pilots had increased in numbers and efficiency, no longer arousing wonder, scepticism or mistrust. For Amy herself the single objective now behind her was replaced by a list of possible programmes, none of them offering the excitement and reward she had once known. As in any other profession one had to make a living, and the months of glamour had revolutionized her budget.

It is partly, but not solely, this condition that gives her life an overall tinge of sadness. It began in those quiet pre-aviation years untouched by press publicity, and mapped only sketchily until now. Miss Babington Smith has undertaken her complete biography with the cooperation of the Johnson family who placed letters and papers at her disposal. Besides their personal memories she has gathered in those of a host of friends and professional acquaintances. In addition, her own distinguished career in aviation has been technically helpful. Above all, insight and understanding of the woman behind the headlines serve to create a living portrait of what might, in clomster hands, have been a mere work of incidents.

Among personal papers the most important single item is a bundle of Amy's early letters whose recipient, not surprisingly, prefers to keep his identity concealed. They tell a different story—of high hopes, betrayal and bitter despair; and they give the clue to her entire flying career as having been a glorious second flight. This miscellany simple "peach-of-a-girl" had two conflicting facets in her make-up. One part of her craved enterprise and adventure; another side longed for nothing so much as a

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

JEAN PRINET and ANTOINETTE DILASSE: *Nadar*. 284pp. Paris: Armand Collin. 8.50fr.

Jean Prinet, Senior Curator of the Department of Periodicals at the Bibliothèque Nationale, and his assistant, Mme. Antoinette Dilasse, have used the large amount of documents and photographs which they have at hand to produce this paperback biography of Gaspard-Félix Tournachon (1820-1910), better known as Nadar, the artist, photographer and balloonist. It is a scholarly, well-produced work, fortunately made easily readable by placing the numerous references sources, and acknowledgments in a fifty-page section at the end of the book. There are seventy-eight illustrations, but the quality of reproduction does not do justice to Nadar's fine photographic portraits.

Nadar began his career as a writer and caricaturist, but owes most of his fame to his photographs and his balloons. He took up photography in 1833-34 and, by 1838, he was a leading portrait photographer. In that year he took the world's first aerial photograph (from a captive balloon over Paris), and a few years later he photographed the Paris catacombs using electric light.

In aeronautics Nadar also displayed his flair for innovation by constructing a gigantic balloon, called *Le Géant*, several times larger than any other gas-balloon of the age. Beside the balloon was slung a two-storey wicker-work car carrying some beds, a photographic studio and a printing press.

During the Siege of Paris in the autumn and winter of 1870-71 he organized a reconnaissance service, and later a postal service, by balloon. He also played a part in promoting the use of photography in the pigeon post which was used during the Siege.

ROADWORK

Bayhead Photos of J. H. Lartigue. 126pp. Patrick Stephens. £7 7s.

W. O. BENTLEY: *My Life and My Cars*. 240pp. Hutchinson. £2 2s.

In photographs—some hilarious, many unique—Jacques Lartigue chronicles how he and his brother and cousins amused themselves on vacations at their country estate, in Paris, among the fashionable ladies, the flying machines and the then fantastic horseless carriages.

This photographer, who took thousands of pictures a year, and who eventually became a painter, displayed a brilliant flair for his subjects, angles and occasions, always capturing the spirit of the moment. Though not exclusively of motoring, his picture collection, compiled by André Guichard fills us with the excitement felt by those begoggled, face-

her feat a failure—she had lagged behind the previous model record.

The last section of Miss Babington Smith's biography is headed "The Victim". It begins, significantly, with the victory progress through Australia, then the dizzy welcom back to England, her struggle with press dictatorship, the bullying and hectoring that scratched the joy of the enterprise. That joy was never to return. In place of it a new, camouflaged surface was chipped on, with the beauty-and-entertainment treatment of a film star. She was doubly a victim when she met and married the playboy-accident Jim Morrison and planned dubious joint ventures, often the less successful for his intelligence and integrity awake to the truth that Jim had neither, the had seen the darkening of the general landscape.

Divorced, she clutched resolutely at a project here, a better there. In 1937 the loss of Amelia Earhart, a woman as sincere and unassuming as her own real self, seemed to switch a light off. "My two main assets," she wrote bitterly to her father, "being Amy Johnson and a woman, are disadvantages at the Air Ministry," which had presumed to offer her a junior post at £3 a week. Deflation had set in; when war broke out the woman Amy Johnson grew reconciled in taking £6 a week as a ferry pilot. She was now 37, and this was at last a serious routine job.

It was also her last assignment. The spirit of irony was abroad again: when, in January, 1941, she crashed to her death in the Thames estuary, rumours went round of a suspicious Mr. X whom she was smuggling out of England. A typical example of war hysteria, it left cobwebs on her memory, and it leaves the reader gloomily reflecting on her "moral tale". It is not the pious morality of sin and punishment, but the spiritual hollowiness sung by disenchanted poets who find "death" the lovelier prophet of the spirit of melancholy. It is a sign of Miss Babington Smith's appreciation that her biography should sound like a echoing choir.

Karagözü, the character, is always portrayed, persecuted, to contrast with authority. At the same time, he is clever and witty, and he is not slavish but rather humorous, bitterly humorous, full of wit and wit, always managing to survive poverty, hunger and most of luck.

Karagözü, the art form has been called "the only form of modern Greek theatre" and has been called "one of the main genuinely living sources of inspiration for the Greek people". The Karagözü plays and comedies.

As well as detailing Nadar's more famous achievements in the field of photography and aeronautics, this biography also contains an account of his role in the French press in the mid-nineteenth century and describes his activities in the revolution of 1848 and in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War.

The Franco-Prussian War, the authors quote freely from Nadar's books, manuscripts and letters.

Theatre and Entertainment

GOOD, CLEAN STUFF

ROY RUSSELL TAYLOR: *The Rise and Fall of the Well-Made Play*. 175pp. Methuen. 30s.

Mr. Taylor is the nearest thing we have to what the theatre and the stage are always asking for—a well-researched account of the drama since 1956, a fiercely honest subject which he approached without the slightest show of partiality. Now he lacks the well-made play from Scribble to Rattigan, another contentious theme which he tackles from a position of detachment.

The Rise and Fall of the Well-Made Play is based on a wide reading of the (mainly forgotten) texts, and is very useful for reference purposes. Chapters on separate plays, though containing thumbnail biographies, relating them to the theatre of their time and covering most of the output. And now that figures of Pinter and Lindsay are making respectable come-back, it is helpful to be given an over-all picture of the despised tradition they represent.

Beyond that it is hard to say much of the book's favour. As the length of the chapters forbids any treatment of the writers in depth, the study has to be justified as an essay animated by a strong idea. Mr. Taylor has an idea that the well-made play

flourished during a period of rigid social convention, and went into a decline when conventions relaxed. As a vehicle for serious drama it perished round about the turn of the century, but it lived on as a vehicle for comedy.

This idea is well worth developing, but it is not developed here. Mr. Taylor merely re-states it from time to time, trimming his opinions of works to fit the theory—as in his objection to Rattigan's *The Winslow Boy*, a successful, serious well-made play written at a time when such a thing ought not to be possible. Other questions arise. If the serious well-made play flourishes on social taboos, why cannot it be fitted to the taboos of subsequent generations (as it can, in the cases of homosexuality and race hatred—a link which Mr. Taylor explicitly fails to make). And why, in any case, should the come well-made play have survived? Comedy, no less than "serious" drama, reflects social convention. And is Mr. Taylor making a statement about social change, or about the influence of what he calls the "poison of Shawian puritanism" which he seems to hold entirely responsible for the big shift in theatrical tastes?

Mr. Taylor's difficulty is that his theme is inseparably bound up with

social values which, as a critic of the "pure entertainment" school, he regards as none of his business. Nor is he ready to go into detail about craftsmanship. He offers no definition of the well-made play; and in discussing texts, his method is to give a plot synopsis at length, and then drop in a few relaxed comments afterwards. So far as they go, these are usually just; but they seem to be delivered off the cuff, and they do no more than underprop received ideas—that the Scribbean well-made play depended on elaborate plot; that Tom Robertson gave the form an injection of modest realism; that Noël Coward pared plot down to the minimum. It would be really interesting to see a Pinter play scrupulously broken down into its working parts; or to see its values related to those of its time and place. But Mr. Taylor has it both ways. As his playwrights are "not thinkers" he has no need to discuss their thought; and as they are professional craftsmen, he has no need to query their craft by dissecting it. The danger of the "entertainment" approach, as this book demonstrates, is that it leaves one with nothing to say.

THE LAST OF THE PUPPETEERS

MARIO RIVOLUCERI: *Behind the White Screen*. Translated and with an introduction by Mario Rivoluceri. 166pp. London Magazine Editions: Alan Ross. Distributed by Secker and Warburg. 12s. 6d.

Karagözü—the main figure of the shadow theatre after whom it is named—is in many ways the perfect example of the "objective" of the character; the mentality of the temperament of modern Greek theatre. Karagözü, as a character and as a form, being originally and on good evidence a descendant of the Dionysian Cabalet and the shadow mysteries, is the carrier of the lovelier prophet of the spirit of melancholy. It is a sign of Miss Babington Smith's appreciation that her biography should sound like a echoing choir.

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BUSINESS IN THE ROUND

BERTAM MILLS: *Bertam Mills Circus*. 271pp. Hutchinson. £2 2s.

Mr. Mills was a large and varied literature of the circus, and it is to be expected that he would be a successful circus manager. He was never a performer in the circus, but he was a manager in the circus.

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Photography

PHOTOTECHNICS

SAMUEL HASKINS: *November Girl*. 112pp. £3 3s. *African Image*. 184pp. £4 4s. Bodley Head.

JOHN D. GREEN: *Birds of Britain*. 144pp. Bodley Head. £3 3s.

YOUSUF KARSH: *Karsh Portfolio*. 203pp. Nelson. £4 4s.

These four new coffee-tables of photographic art in black-and-white include two by Samuel Haskins who made *Five Girls* (1962) and *Cowboy Kate* (1965). The publishers have wisely allowed him to design the layout of his pictures in both volumes which reveal him as a confident and creative photographer, who, though sometimes mannered, has a highly individual approach. *November Girl* is the less satisfactory of the two. Its subject is a single, sexy girl of melancholy mien, waiting in and out of her clothes, for the boy who never turns up. She is always alone except for an occasional bird, horse or doll, mourning for him who cometh not in prose-poem bursts styled like the Song of Solomon. The allegory is romantic and sad in a frustrated pre-romantic way, and the mystery remains why no other knight now woos the girl from her morbid obsession, for she is beautiful and the other chap must now be presumed to be dead.

African Image is not a travel book but a personal essay about a small part of the vast continent in which the photographer was reared—about some of the natives who live there, their ritualistic art and their Congolese landscape. The photographs are straight, strong and splendid, particularly the close shots of faces and masks, and the *nude-en-page* is subtle. This, according to L. Fritz Gruber, who adds a comment to the book, is "photopoezy".

Birds of Britain is not a new Audubon but a fleshy paradise of two noble young women in the post-Shirley London—mostly actresses, singers and models revealed in a variety of forms and postures by an advertising photographer. In short the current British Girl of Fashion. At least she seems hopper than the November Girl of unknown origins even if she may be obliged at times to take a dip in sump oil or to sit, tight and naked, for some unrevealed purpose in a washing-up bowl. Names and descriptions are provided but no telephone numbers.

The fourth big book elevates one swiftly to a dignified place in an appraisal of the unmanly but masterly portraits of men and women of international renown by Karsh of Ottawa—Fleming, Churchill, Nehru, Khrushchev, Hemingway, Chogall, Carius, Stravinsky, Picasso, Moore, to name a random few in a gallery of forty-eight, all superbly reproduced by velvety gravure. They confirm a view that Armenian-born Karsh is among the greatest since photography began in a profession where photography can compete successfully in its own right with painting. Not only does the composing and the portrayal of inner character impress but also the perfect technique of chiaroscuro. In his vivid documentation of those that have left a mark on their time, Karsh has created a legacy which will be of value to future historians. To have been "Karshed" is to have achieved a new kind of immortality.

Collins Christmas Shopping List

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The autobiography of this year. *illus 46s*

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A Field Guide to the Mammals of Britain & Europe *80s*

AUBREY LEWIS: *Inquiries in Psychiatry*. 335pp. *The State of Psychiatry*. 310pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, £3 3s. each.

and is still a humane, enlightened, polite, and tolerant man—while critical, for example, of the unscientific aspects of psychoanalysis, he has never descended into strident aggressiveness: his rejoinder to a rash or ill-considered piece of pontification from a colleague, whether of his own generation or of the most junior in the establishment of which he was the head, was characteristically to reply (with an earnest and almost diffident mien often softened by a charming smile), "of course you've read . . . , citing some key text in the literature on the subject concerned."

In this way much of the published background knowledge of psychiatry was taught at least as much by example as by precept. Throughout Sir Aubrey's classical work he constantly reminded the young specialists who were to emerge eventually as teachers and consultants all over the world of the essential interrelationship between psychiatry and the rest of medicine, together with the necessity of rigorous scientific and clinical criteria for its description and practice. Yet he was always aware of the immense social implication of the subject, outside medicine as well as within it. His balance and judgment in evaluating these implications can be exemplified by this extract from "Health as a Social Concept":

Though our estimate of the efficiency with which functions work must take account of the social environment which supplies stimuli and satisfies needs, the criteria of health are not primarily social: it is misconceived to equate ill-health with social deviance or maladjustment. If we avoid this error, we shall find it easier to establish a link between health and social well-being and to, one may hope, learn how to

To further both has been Sir Aubrey's aim; and when the time comes to write his epitaph it will surely be said that in this respect he did what he set out to do.

COLIN CLARK: *Population Growth and Land Use.* 406pp. Macmillan. £3 10s.

mies are dependent for their well-being on the growth of their markets. Demographic increase, multiplying urban sprawl and breadlines, and the gap between rich and poor communities, but is otherwise to be pronounced. For Dr. Clark is convinced, the world will still provide for all foreseeable future; the extractive industries—mining, agriculture—depend on resources far richer than the population explosion and the Malthusian belief. Dr. Clark offers to science-fiction or the delirium. Now, without any gimmicks, we know enough to logically to welcome growth. His judgment from our leading natural economist is beatified.

It is not entirely convincing, that the demographic orthodoxy probably wrong seems more likely. Dr. Clark is exceedingly worth the most serious attention; he will relate his case in a popular form—no valuable reappearance what has seemed a debate. Probably humanity and change will survive and succeed our prophets, including Dr. Clark.

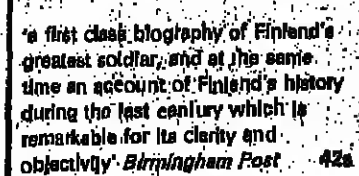
respect as person to person, and recalls Martin Buber's discussion of I-and-I and I-thou relationships. Above all, it re-iterates the fundamental position that it is *not* right in the methods of "changing" policies or behaviors that deliberately intringe their personal integrity?"

The second division of the book might well be entitled "Unfair to Wesley": It is an interesting, though perhaps over-detailed, historical account of Wesley's actual beliefs, sermons and writings. How destructive of brilliant theories and striking parallels plain brutal facts can be! Repudiating "the blasphemy of the horrible doctrine of predestination," in the Calvinist teaching still alive in popular opinion, he preached to men who already felt, *non plus*, frustrated and rejected—

IN RAGE: *Battle for the Free Mind.* Foreword by H. Guntrip. 269pp. Allen and Unwin. £2.

graphy: *The Unguiter Mind*, before completing it, a general would have become plain to him; the author's compassionate and complete dedication to healing, his understandable impatience with the erudities and absurdities of certain doctrinaire Freudians, and, his hard struggle against medical orthodoxy to be allowed to use swift psychophysical means to restore the balance of war-shattered neurones, and to bring back to sanity miserable patients previously treated as hopelessly mad, a struggle in which the work of Pavlov was a great support.

What is done to heal the sick, however, cannot be used as a precedent or justification for the mental corruption of the sound, and it is to be hoped that Mr. Ramage's study will arouse and keep awake a general recognition of this fact.



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